

MINUTES OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**October 24, 2006
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 417 of the Arizona Department of Education, 1535 W. Jefferson Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman
Mr. Jim DiCello
Dr. Eugene Garcia
Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan
Ms. Johanna Haver
Ms. Eileen Klein
Ms. Karen Merritt
Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent: Mr. John Baracy

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Approval of September 21, 2006 and September 22, 2006 minutes of Task Force Meetings

Mr. Alan Maguire announced that the ELL Task Force minutes from September 21st and from September 22nd were ready for review and approval. Two changes were made to the September 21st minutes: a sentence was deleted and a misspelled name was corrected. The September 21st minutes were approved as amended. The September 22 minutes were approved without changes.

3. Presentations and discussions of Structured English Immersion (SEI) program models

Six presentations were made to the Task Force. The schools and/or districts represented were: Children's Success Academy, Blue Ridge Unified SD, PPEP Tech High Schools, Humboldt Unified SD, Isaac Elementary SD, and Tempe Elementary SD.

Children's Success Academy

Dr. Nanci R. Aiken, Director of the Children's Success Academy in Tucson, addressed the Task Force. The Children's Success Academy is a single-site K-5 charter school. The school targets

students with behavioral difficulties, but will admit all students. The school population is 89 students, primarily Hispanic, with an ELL population of 24 students, 27% of the total student population. Most of their ELLs are in K, 1, or 2. The ELLs tend to become fluent by 3rd grade, and then they go to other schools so that they can participate in band, sports, etc.

The Children's Success Academy provides total English immersion of ELLs with native English speakers. The school has six classrooms and one teacher per classroom. All of the teachers & paraprofessionals are Highly Qualified. The classes are capped at 20 students. The kindergarten is full-day. The school uses Star Reader and Accelerated Reader assessment programs. The average time for reclassification from ELL to Fluent English Proficient (FEP) is two years. The Children's Success Academy provides interventions through after school tutoring, after school homework help, and a summer school program that includes crafts.

Ms. Johanna Haver asked how the school addresses behavioral problems. Ms. Aiken responded that the school uses a positive approach to reach the students, and the curriculum incorporates problem-solving and confrontation skill-building. Ms. Aiken stated that the school also controls student nutrition: the types of food and beverages that are consumed during the school day can have no sugar or sugar substitutes and must be healthy, such as whole grain products, juice, and water. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked if the school was aware of or had applied for and used any state compensatory education money. Ms. Aiken was unaware of the availability of such funds and will look into applying for them. Ms. Haver and Dr. Eugene Garcia expressed interest in the school's AIMS data and other test results, and Ms. Aiken did not have this information with her. However, she will e-mail it, as requested by the Task Force members.

Blue Ridge Unified School District

Mr. Don Hotz, ELL Coordinator and K-6 SEI teacher, Blue Ridge Unified School District, in Pinetop-Lakeside, addressed the Task Force. Mr. Hotz said that their program currently serves 150 ELLs in K-12, approximately 6% of their total student population of 2700 students. K-6 has approximately 120 of the 150 ELLs. The district currently monitors 74 ELLs in either first or second year of monitoring. Spanish is the language of most of their ELLs; however, they also have students who speak Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Polish, German, Apache, and Navajo. Their program has three certified, highly qualified teachers and two paraprofessionals who are bilingual in Spanish.

Blue Ridge Unified has half-day kindergarten and provides a 30-minute language arts block because of the attention span and maturity level of kindergarteners. The language arts block complements the language enrichment program taught in kindergarten. In grades 1-6, the ELLs are totally immersed in mainstream classrooms except for 50-minutes a day when they are assigned an SEI language arts block. The SEI block is scheduled around ancillary classes, such as art, music, and P.E. because these ancillary classes help build oral language and ELLs can be successful in them. The 7th and 8th grade ELLs receive a variety of classes. SEI courses are taught in English, social studies, science, and mathematics by highly qualified teachers in their

content areas. Students are grouped into these classes based on their language ability. ELLs assessed as pre-emergent or basic have year-round SEI English. The high school has a four-period daily schedule, and SEI classes are provided in English and social studies. The SEI English classes are taught for the entire year by a highly qualified teacher. ELLs are not all in one classroom; from K – 6, there are approximately 2 to 3 ELLs per classroom. Blue Ridge has worked hard to get their second language learners to socialize with their English role models. Mr. Hotz is opposed to providing a “4 hour intensive language development” course for newcomers because by placing all newcomers in one classroom, they will only socialize with themselves and rely on their classroom peers during recess or playtime. They will rely on their native language rather than using their new language, English.

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked what a day looks like for a 4th grade, 7th grade, and high school ELL at Blue Ridge. Mr. Hotz responded that the 4th grade ELLs come to him (ELL teacher) first for 50 minutes, then go back to their regular classroom for the rest of the day, totally immersed in English. The 7th grader who is pre-emergent and basic in English proficiency level will have sheltered social studies and science and a year-round SEI English class. Above basic level, a student will have SEI English, social studies, and science. The high school ELL has an SEI English class, leveled by basic or intermediate, 85 minutes per day all year long. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked the credentials of the SEI English class teacher and was told that the teacher has an ESL Endorsement. Dr. Garcia asked how the students perform. Mr. Hotz replied that the AMAOs have been achieved the last 3 years in a row. All ELLs take Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards) AIMS, and Terra Nova tests. Most ELLs are meeting AIMS or above. Dr. Garcia asked Mr. Hotz to send any test data that shows the district’s program is meeting the needs of the ELLs. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked if the school was aware of or had applied for and used any state compensatory education money. Mr. Hotz responded that they haven’t yet because they haven’t had time to apply. In response to Task Force member questions, Mr. Hotz said that the average time needed for ELLs to mainstream is 3 to 4 years, and approximately 20% of the ELLs are reclassified each year.

PPEP Tec High Schools

Ms. Sharon Davis is the ELL and Testing Director and Regional Coordinator of the PPEP Tec High Schools, a charter school district. Ms. Davis described PPEP Tec. There are 12 high schools throughout southern Arizona, in three regions. Each school has open enrollment and serves students who are not succeeding in traditional public high schools. There are about 1,000 students in the district. The largest school, in South Tucson, has 250 students, and conversely, the school in Bisbee has 20 to 25 students. The students, 15-21 years old, are trying to earn a high school diploma. Eleven of the schools are like one-room schoolhouses. The majority of the students come to the PPEP Tec schools with an average of 5th to 6th grade abilities. The school offers a self-paced program: students are required to earn 2½ credits per semester.

Approximately a fourth of the student population is ELL. Last year, 12% of their ELLs became fluent English proficient (FEP) and 12% increased their English language proficiency by at least one level. The average number of ELLs varies and changes per school.

The Language Arts program has 5 levels; students are assessed into the program. Because of the initial delay receiving Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) results, the schools made interim placements. SEI is for Pre-emergent – Basic ELLs. Intermediate ELLs are mainstreamed. Proficient students who exit from SEI are monitored. If remediation is needed, tutors assist the students. Friday is used for one-on-one assistance.

Ms. Karen Merritt asked for a description of the SEI program a pre-emergent through basic ELL student would be placed into. The ELL would be placed in Level 1, a core program (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)) and Fast Forward, and enriched curriculum, with lots of one on one, for 2-4 hours of a 5-hour school day. The student ratio is 15:1 or much smaller. Ms. Davis said that if the ELLs stay with PPEP Tec, they will become English proficient. She said that it is usually a year, or at maximum, two years, until an ELL is mainstreamed. She noted that there are a few ELLs who are not proficient in their third year. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked how successful are the schools in meeting the academic needs, such as the graduation rate? He asked if Ms. Davis had evidence of student success. Ms. Davis agreed to send data to Ms. Irene Moreno, who will get the data distributed to Task Force members. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked if the majority of the students who attend PPEP Tec had been enrolled in traditional public schools before attending PPEP Tec, and Ms. Davis answered affirmatively.

Humboldt Unified School District

Ms. Mariela Bean, Language Acquisition Director, Humboldt Unified School District, in Prescott, made a PowerPoint® presentation (attached to original minutes) to the Task Force. There are 10 schools in the district, and a total population of 6,500 students in October 2006. Of those, 517 are ELLs. Most of the ELLs are in 2 elementary schools. There is 1 teacher per 50 students at a site, and there are no more than 15 students per class. There are also aides for every school. All teachers are SEI trained.

The Humboldt Unified School District's (HUSD) three major goals are to raise level of student achievement, focus on future needs, and increase parental/community involvement. HUSD tailors classes to needs of ELLs. The district has SEI Programs at all levels. The focus is on subject mastery. The first year block is 4 hours, and the second year block is a minimum of 90 minutes; the ELL aides assist the teachers. Students are grouped by language proficiency levels. The program is fluid; there are quarterly assessments, and ELLs are moved along the continuum as quickly as possible. The framework for sheltered instruction is SIOP. For the ELLs in middle school and high school, course hybrids are used that teach reading and writing through science and social studies. Ms. Bean provided sample programs for 9th and 10th graders.

Ms. Bean stated that the district has been successful aligning ELL standards to academic standards, using horizontal and vertical teaming, and conducting continual analysis of internal data to adjust instruction. The district is working hard to increase parental/community

involvement, including having staff members call parents and invite them to attend meetings and offering English classes at each site for parents. The district has made continued gains in student achievement, including meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for 3 consecutive years. Ms. Bean observed that the ELLs attending the two schools with lowest number of ELLs are doing the best at these schools.

Ms. Karen Merritt asked what instruments were being used for ELL quarterly assessments. Ms. Bean responded that AZELLA is used annually. The district developed additional assessments that are aligned to state standards because the district wanted more frequent assessments so that ELLs can be moved along the SEI program continuum. HUSD uses Tech Paths to house data so that teachers can track student progress and print reports that show what concepts their students have missed.

Ms. Bean said that the district has used Compensatory Instruction funds in the past and noted that they were not available last year. At each site, a program is offered for an hour either before or after school. In the past, it has been language development, this year the focus is on math and science. The district provides a six-week summer school, and 350 of 400+ students attend. The district also has used AIMS tutoring funds. The high school drop-out rate is 17%. One way the district is addressing the drop-out rate is through partnering with Yavapai College for a dual credit career and vocational education class. In response to a question by Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan, Ms. Bean said that rigorous training is given to teachers on ELL proficiency standards, both systemically in the district, and specifically, in the ELL program. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked about the teachers in the SEI program and was told that all have their master's degrees or endorsements. Ms. Merritt asked for details of the SEI program. Ms. Bean said that monolinguals (pre-emergent and emergent assessment levels) at all grade levels receive 4 hours/day of SEI instruction. She said they can embed music and art in SEI instruction. Ms. Bean said that teachers don't feel as fragmented when they have the ELLs for a 4 hour block.

Dr. Garcia asked what amount of money is augmented for ELLs? Specifically, how much above the Title I A and B-weight monies does the district receive for the existing program for ELLs? Ms. Bean said that she will ask her finance director for financial figures. She also will send the cost analysis that the district already has completed. Ms. Bean said that probably 90% of Title I are ELLs. The two schools that have the highest ELL population are Reading First schools. Reading First is very prescriptive and systematic. Ms. Bean spoke about the one traditional school in her district. She said it was a high performing school that has about 10% ELLs. Because students are placed there by choice, parents are required to commit so many hours a month in volunteer work. The schools enforce discipline, including the requirement of uniforms. The grading is harder: 93%+ is an A.

Ms. Garcia Dugan asked about the amount of time needed for ELLs to reclassify. Ms. Bean responded that the average time to mainstream is two years. They are not ready to pass the AIMS at that point. Ms. Merritt asked if the average of about two years was the same regardless of grade level. Ms. Bean stated that they reclassify ELLs at lower levels at a faster rate in elementary, probably in one year, compared with high school at the end of year 2. She added

that those that come into the district in 9th grade tend to do really well, whereas the ELLs who arrive in 11th or 12th grade tend to drop out because they get discouraged.

Isaac Elementary School District

Dr. Kent Scribner, Isaac Elementary School District, described the district. There are approximately 9,000 students, of whom 81% have a primary home language other than English (PHLOTE) and 48% are ELLs. There are 10 schools with various configurations: K-5, Middle School, K-8, pre-school, and a family literacy center. One of the schools is Alston Elementary. Alston Elementary has always made Adequate Yearly progress (AYP). Alston was awarded a \$500,000 grant over five years. This additional funding permits smaller groups. Coaches are available. There are ELL experts in classrooms, more staff members than other schools, and individualized instruction.

Students are grouped by language proficiency and have oral language development. The teachers are highly-qualified. There is sustained high quality professional development.

The SEI program uses SIOP district-wide and uses Specifically Designed Instruction In English (SDAIE). He said the district needs more money. Fully 93% of the students receive free and reduced lunches.

Ms. Johanna Haver asked if the district receives desegregation money. Dr. Scribner responded affirmatively. He said that the expenditures of desegregation money must match up to the desegregation order. About 50 % of the desegregation funding is used for ELLs. Because 50% of Isaac's total student population is ELL, the ELLs are in mainstream classes. They are grouped by proficiency level and are provided additional appropriate assistance. In the middle schools, two daily 45-minute periods of SEI instruction are provided; at the elementary school level, language instruction is provided throughout the day. For example, a pre-emergent level 3rd grade ELL is placed in a mainstream classroom and during the day, the instruction is organized so that he/she receives additional English support, learning about English as well as learning *in* English in the regular classroom. The district needs additional regular classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and English language development interventionists. Currently, in their K-3 schools, the ratio is 23:1; in grades 4 and 5, the ratio is 25:1, and in Middle School, the ratio is 26 or 27:1. Alston, Mitchell, and Esperanza made AYP. Reclassification to proficient takes maybe three years. Isaac has a summer program, and holds the session close to the beginning of the school year so that it serves as a jump-start program for the upcoming school year.

Tempe Elementary School District

Ms. Debra Gomez, Assistant Superintendent, Tempe Elementary School District, described the district. She said the district is data rich, and she will send data to the Task Force. There are 13,500 students, of whom approximately 3,000 are ELLs (22%); 53 languages are spoken by the students. There are six Reading First Schools in Tempe Elementary SD. Using the Reading First framework, Ms. Gomez described important characteristics of SEI programs for ELLs. She started with leadership. Leadership includes having trained principals who can use SIOP to

evaluate SEI teachers in the classroom, having highly-qualified teachers with full endorsements, using effective instructional strategies that include instructional programs that can be differentiated (from pre-emergent to proficient), using formative assessments in addition to AZELLA to monitor and change small groupings. Interventions need to occur throughout the school day.

Ongoing and sustained staff development is critical: Tempe Elementary School District has 5 ELL coaches as part of their differentiated staff development for teachers in 25 schools. Staff in regular classrooms is going into the SIOP model heavily. Class size in the district increases at the higher grades: in K-1, the ratio is 22:1; in grades 2 and 3, the ratio is 24:1; in grades 4-8, there is a standard of 32 students to one teacher, but very few classrooms are above 30:1.

In Middle School, ELL students are assigned a designated ELL language arts teacher for a 90-100 minute reading or language and literacy block, where they are taught according to proficiency level, and then ELLs are mainstreamed for the rest of the day. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan asked how much time was needed, on average, for an ELL to be reclassified. Ms. Gomez responded that language proficiency has been reached in 2-3 years using the SELP assessment. Many schools that are not Reading First have copied the program, having a coach and interventionist. The ELLs are grouped by proficiency and working on specific skills with the teaching/intervention team. Compensatory Instruction funds are used for summer school for six weeks for K-8 students.

A Tempe Elementary School District K-3 funding override provides the money for after school tutoring for the lower grades. When asked if the district receives desegregation funds, Ms. Gomez replied affirmatively. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked if the data suggests that using Reading First is helping ELLs. Ms. Gomez responded that ELLs still are not progressing as well as non-ELLs, but they are progressing better than ELLs at schools not using the Reading First model and not providing the interventions. In Reading First, students are getting three tiers of interventions: through the 90-minute period, outside the 90-minute period, and then after school. They get three interventions *in addition to* their regular reading program. Dr. Garcia asked for any additional data that could be provided that might support the thesis that the additional interventions are making a difference in ELL reading skills. Ms. Karen Merritt asked how many hours a day would a student receive in direct English instruction in the Reading First program. If a student is in the intensive section, he/she would receive 90 minutes, plus 30 minutes outside the 90 minutes, and then an after school model of 30 – 60 minutes.

4. Presentations and discussion of components, definitions, and terms of SEI program models

Presentations by English Acquisition Services Office staff members were postponed because of the lateness in the day.

5. Call to the Public

Mr. Alan Maguire made the call to the public. There were no public statements.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Alan Maguire adjourned the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Arizona ELL Task Force

Alan Maguire, Chairman
December 18, 2006